DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 203 003 CE 028 803

AUTHOR Rozar, Luther L.: And Others
TITLE County Community Development Studies. No. 2: Extensions Library on Tape, Sarasota County.
INSTITUTION Florida Univ., Gainesville. Inst. of Food and Agricultural Sciences.
PUB DATE [80]
NOTE 29p.: Some pages will not reproduce well due to light, broken print.
AVAILABLE FROM University of Florida, Agricultural and Extension Education, 305 Rolfs Hall, Gainesville, FL 32611 (Free copy).

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Access to Education; Adults; Attitudes; Audiotape Cassettes; *Dial Access Information Systems; Evaluation; *Extension Education; *Feasibility Studies; Information Needs; *Information Services; Information Utilization; Library Materials; Library Services; Telecommunications; *User Satisfaction (Information); Use Studies
IDENTIFIERS *Florida (Sarasota County)

ABSTRACT

A study was conducted in Sarasota County, Florida, to determine the feasibility of implementing a County Extension Service library on telecassette tape that could be dialed by phone callers. The system would allow office callers access to two-to-three-minute tape recordings containing information on many common problems. A survey instrument containing questions about the respondent's previous contacts with Extension service and the respondent's possible use of the telephone system was mailed to 349 persons randomly selected from Extension's mailing list, and to a like number selected at random from the telephone book, with a total 52 percent return. The response to the survey was generally very positive. The responses of both groups surveyed confirmed that the nonpersonal style of delivery is acceptable in some subject matter areas. Respondents generally were interested in taped information about the weather, mildew problems, insect control, weed control, and fertilizing. As a result of the survey, it was decided to acquire the equipment needed to implement the library on tape, and a budget request was made. (KC)

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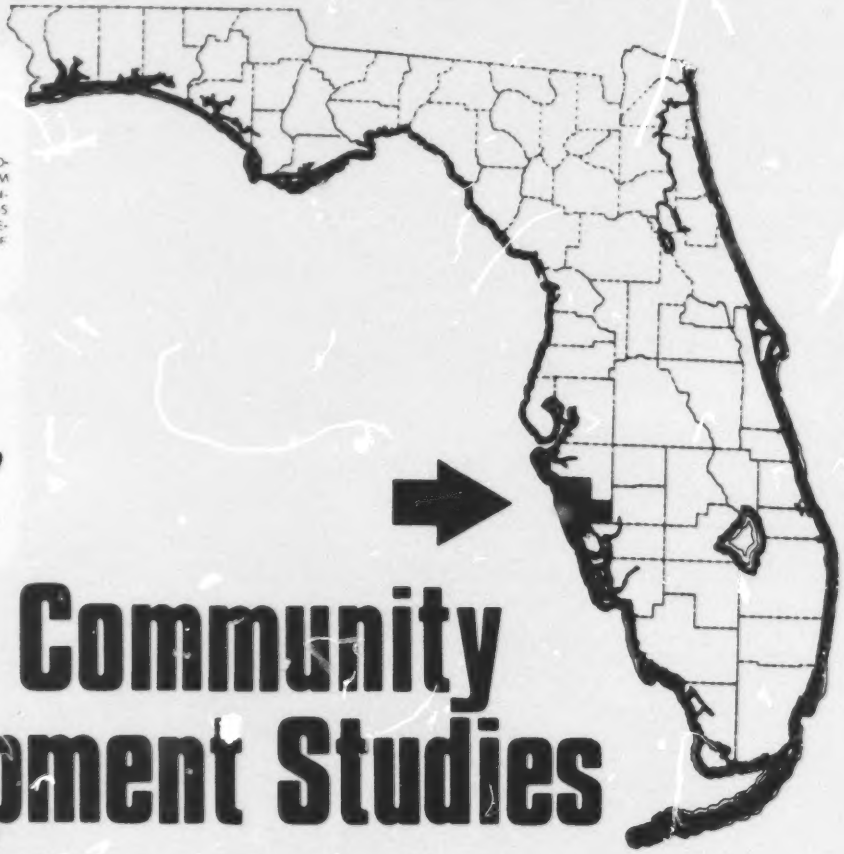

County Community Development Studies

No. 2: Extensions Library on Tape Sarasota County

Luther L. Rozar, Jeanette Meadows and Elva L. S. Farrell

Center for Community & Rural Development and
Department of Agricultural and Extension Education

Florida Cooperative Extension Service
Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences
University of Florida, Gainesville

CE 028 803

EXTENSION'S LIBRARY ON TAPE

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Sarasota County

COUNTY BASED

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PROJECTS

The following report represents the community development efforts of an extension agent at the county level. This project demonstrates, in-so-far as possible, the unbiased collection of data for decision making and the involvement of the community in the solution or identification of a problem.

We applaud the efforts of this extension agent in the area of community and rural development.

Editor:

Wm. S. Farrington

Department of Agricultural & Extension Education

Project Sponsors:

Dr. Carl E. Beeman
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EXTENSION'S LIBRARY ON TAPE

The feasibility of a "Library on Tape" is a worthwhile project to explore, due to the limited resources available to meet the needs of an ever-increasing urban population. Whether or not the use of telecassette delivery is acceptable for providing information on topics of general interest to a large audience is a question which should be determined.

Demographic Data--Sarasota County, Florida

Sarasota County, which is situated directly on the Gulf Coast of Florida, midway down the peninsula, provides an ideal setting for those seeking a warm climate and sandy beaches. Annual temperatures average 73.5 degrees Fahrenheit. Rainfall averages 52.8 inches annually.

Population

The general trend in population growth is estimated to be 6 percent. The migration of retirees to Sarasota County makes up most of the growth. The following statistics define this trend:

Population Growth (year-round residents):

1960 - 76,895
1970 - 120,413 (56.6 percent increase)
1977 - 178,996 (41.7 percent increase)
1980 - 199,200 - Projection
1985 - 221,400 "
2000 - 285,200 - "

Median Age of Population: (The age at which 50 percent of population is older/50 percent younger)

Age distribution is a particularly important component of the population, for it has a direct effect on the kind of services de-

manded. Sarasota County residents are in the older age groups, as approximately 37 percent are age 60 or older. While nationally the median age has decreased, both Florida and Sarasota County have shown an increase.

Population Growth:	1950	1960	1970	1975
Sarasota County	- 36.4 yr.	40.5	49.6	--
Florida	- 30.9	31.5	32.3	--
U.S.A.	- 30.2	29.5	28.0	28.8

Functional Population - 1977:

Housing Units	- 92,748
Year Round Occupancy	- 86.5%
Year Round Occupied Houses	- 79,880
Persons Per Unit	- 2.24%
Functional Population (92,748 X 2.24)	- 206,414

Race of Population:

	Sarasota Co.		Florida		U.S.	
	1970	1975	1970	1975	1970	1975
White	93.0%	94.5%	84.5	86.2	87.6	86.9
Non-White	7.0%	5.5%	15.8	13.8	12.4	13.1

School Enrollment: Schools in the county operate on a 35 percent annual turnover rate (that is, the number of students who leave school versus the number of new students who enroll). This is accounted for by both the mobility of young parents and the seasonality of Sarasota County's functional population. Although non-whites make up 12.3 percent of the student population, they represent only 5.5 percent of the total population of the county.

Student Population of the County's Schools

1970 - 19,086 Average Daily Attendance
1975 - 20,998 " " "
1979 - 22,367 " " "

Economic Indicators: Only 34 percent of the population is employed,

but the level of personal income in Sarasota County is higher than that of the region, the state, and the nation. The county has the highest per capita income of Florida's 67 counties.

Most Sarasotans don't work, but those who do, earn their living primarily in service and retail trades. The rate of hotel and motel employment in Sarasota is more than three times that of the national average, as is the rate of amusement and recreation service.

Agriculture, as a whole, has employment levels below those of the rest of the country (less than 2 percent).

Wages and salaries make up the largest single component of personal income, but income from dividends, interest and rents is only slightly lower--35 percent compared to 37 percent. The third major contributor to personal income is transfer payments, including social security, heir to dependent children, and other social service payments.

Therefore, rapid growth, high population turnover, and both in-and-out migration have caused program expectations to increase. In migration growth from areas of the U.S. where Extension has large staffs, larger programs and more services have brought a population with similarly high expectations.

The Survey Methodology

The possibility of using the telecassette telephone information system became more attractive as urban population increased and the program expectations of the community became clear. This system would allow office callers and visitors access to two-to-three minute tape recordings containing information on many common problems, following personal conversations with the receptionist or program

assistants. The tapes would be prepared by Extension agents, who would extend their expertise to clients through staff contacts.

The reason for conducting this study was to determine the acceptability of this method for providing information on topics of general interest to a large number of our clientele. If the study showed that the public would be receptive to this type of delivery, the possibility of acquiring needed equipment and personnel to operate the system could be explored.

The survey was conducted by mail to gather the data for the project. The survey sample was drawn from two sources: one from Extension's mailing lists, which represent citizens actively involved in on-going Extension programs; and the other from the general population of Sarasota County, selected from the telephone directories of Sarasota, Venice, North Port, and Englewood.

A random sample was selected from Extension mailing lists of 2450 names. The random sample consisted of 349 names, or every seventh name on the list. The agricultural, home economics and 4-H mailing lists were all used to give a complete representation of program participants.

A random sample of the general population was developed by selecting one name from each page in the telephone directories, by chance. If the name selected proved to be a business listing, or if there was not a complete mailing address, or if the name was a duplicate from the other list, the researchers selected the name directly above the first time and the name directly below the name the second time.

Since the acceptability of telephone equipment was being sur-

veyed, the use of the telephone directory to select this sample of 482 names was justified. Even though the sample might not represent the total population, it was representative of the ultimate users of the service; that is, persons who have telephones. However, the majority of the telephone directory listings are men. In future surveys, it would be wise to have an indication of who in the household is responding, or a statement in the letter of explanation to point out that any member of the household may respond.

The survey instrument (See Appendix A) was developed through several editions. Fellow classmates and agents of the researchers discussed the instrument, and revisions were made. The order and content of the questions was changed for clarity, orderly flow of the concept, and for fit on one legal-sized page.

A letter of transmittal and explanation accompanied the survey form to the sample mailing lists. The letter explained the purpose of the survey, its importance, the need for their assistance, their prompt response, and the strict confidence of their reply. A self-addressed, postage-paid return envelope was enclosed. The first mailing of the survey (yellow form) was made on Thursday, May 3, 1979. A follow-up thank you and reminder postcard was mailed on Tuesday, May 8. The second and final survey form (blue), with a follow-up letter of transmittal, was mailed on Friday, May 11. All survey forms received through Monday, May 21 were included in the data.

Results and Analysis of the Data

The response to the survey was generally very positive. The responses of both groups surveyed confirmed that the non-personal style of delivery is acceptable in some subject matter areas. The

fact that those who have already had contact with the Extension Service in more personal or individual ways would accept this style of delivery is encouraging to the researchers.

Of the 831 instruments mailed, 432, or 52 percent, were returned. The return from each mailing list was not significantly different: 55 percent from the Extension mailing list and 49 percent from the general sample. Twenty-nine percent of the instruments returned were those from the second mailing; therefore, a second instrument did help. It was not considered necessary to follow-up with a telephone reminder, because of the 50 percent response, which was considered sufficient to provide the needed information.

The first question on the instrument was "In which of the following ways have you had contact with the Cooperative Extension Service in Sarasota County?"

The response to this was perhaps the most significant of all. The researchers expected that all respondents from the mailing list sample would indicate contact, but of the 236 from the telephone sample who responded, only 49 percent indicated that they had had contact with the Extension Service. This indicates that the Extension Service is effectively reaching only half of the population.

As the following graph indicates, most contacts have been made through the mass media (See Table 1).

Table 1

Which of the following ways have you had contact with the Cooperative Extension Service in Sarasota County?

Type of Contact	Number Selecting Type of Contact			Distribution of Type of Contact
	Extension Sample	General Sample	Total Responses	Percent of Total Responses
Correspondence	58	11	69	7%
4-H or Homemakers Clubs	51	3	54	5
Exhibits	59	19	78	8
Home & Gardening Tips	21	8	29	3
Newspaper, Radio, T.V.	56	51	107	10
Newsletter	112	15	127	12
Office Visits	79	28	107	10
Programs	70	11	81	8
Publications	89	33	122	12
Telephone	85	34	119	12
None	3	123	126	12
No Response	1	11	12	1
			1031	100%

Question 2, "Are you familiar with the tele-consumer toll-free number pre-taped telephone information?" and Question 3, "Have you used this service?", were included in the instrument to determine how familiar people were with this type of delivery and how receptive they would be to using it. As expected, only 11 percent (50 persons) responded that they were familiar with the service, and only 5 percent had used it.

Table 2

Question 2: Are you familiar with the tele-consumer toll-free number pre-taped information?

Yes	No
11%	87%

N = 426

Table 3

Question 3: Have you used this service?

Yes	No
5 %	93%

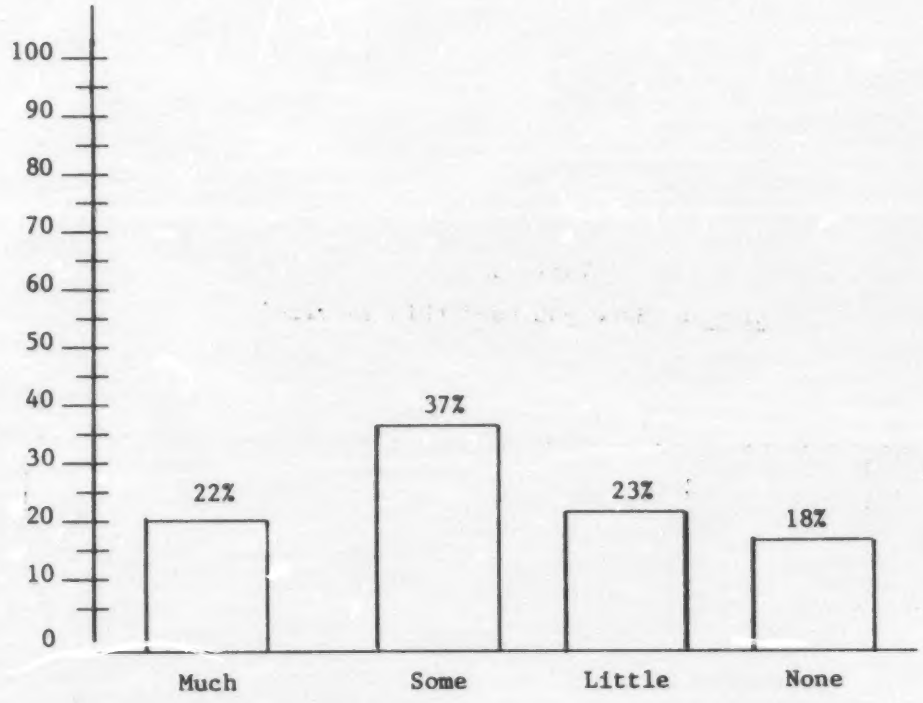
N = 422

Question 4 was "How much do you rely on the telephone for 'information'?" With 59 percent of the respondents indicating some or much

reliance on the telephone for information, it was concluded that the telephone is a reliable method for program delivery (See Table 4). The following question indicates that respondents would accept telephone tape information to answer their questions if it were available. There was some indication that respondents misinterpreted the question considering it an inquiry about the degree of their reliance on the telephone for information from the Extension Service.

Table 4.

Question 4: How much do you rely on the telephone for information?



N = 410

Question 5 asked, "In which of the following taped telephone topics are you interested?"

There was an overwhelming interest in the weather report, which was surprising, as this is not an area on which Extension agents are called for information, generally. The next numbers of responses were less surprising, as numerous calls are answered on mildew problems, insect control, weed control and fertilizing.

If, indeed, the majority of these persons' queries could be answered with taped information, the agents' time would become free to work with other areas of concern in the on-going program.

Question 6 was used to determine the length of residency in Sarasota County per year of respondents. The majority of those who responded are year-round residents. The instrument was mailed third class; therefore, it was not forwarded to seasonal residents who have returned north for the summer. Had this survey been taken during December, January or February, the results would certainly include the response of more seasonal residents.

Item 7 (See Table 6) gave an indication of age groups. A significantly large number, 192, or 45 percent were over 65 years of age; 74 percent (312 persons) were over the age of 50. These percentages are higher than the percentages of the total population in the statistics presented earlier in this paper. It could be surmised that older persons who are retired and have spare time will take the time to complete and return surveys. (See Table 6).

Plan of Action

Based on the results of the survey, it was decided to acquire the equipment needed to implement the "Library on Tape." In the proposed

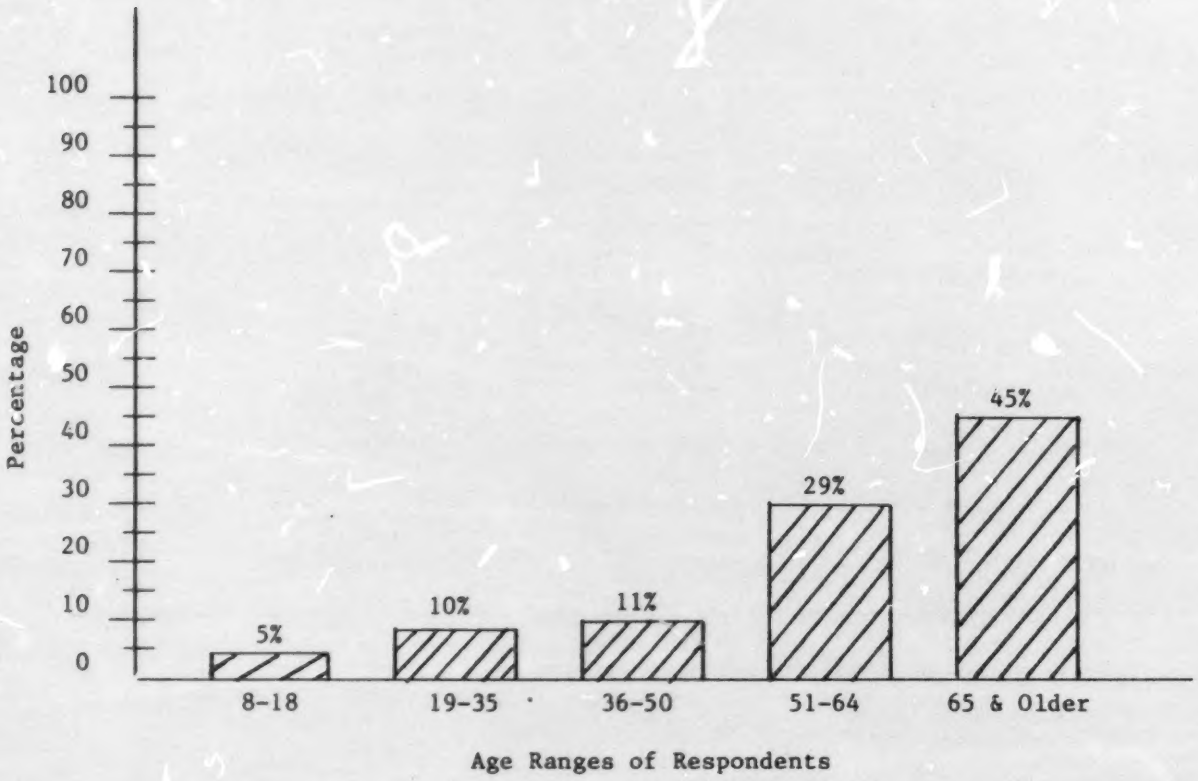
Table 5.

Taped Telephone Topic Requests.

Topic	Number of Persons Requesting Each Topic
Ant and Roach Control	153
Budget Guidelines	48
Canning Guidelines	48
Care of Citrus Trees	146
Controlling Plant Pests	158
Controlling Weeds in Lawn	142
Energy and Water Conservation	130
Farm Economic Outlook	15
Fertilizing Plants	161
4-H Activity Information	23
Freezing Fruits and Vegetables	84
How to Join 4-H	7
How to Start a Vegetable Garden	84
Lawn Insect Control	133
Livestock Topics	22
Microwave Use	60
Mildew Prevention	164
Mobile Home Publications	31
Outdoor Cooking	57
Planning Nutritious Meals	92
Refinishing Furniture	66
Roasting Meats and Fowl	65
Selecting an Appliance	47
Weather Forecast	206
None	12

Table 6.

Percentage of Respondents by Age.



N = 432

budget, recently submitted to the County Commission, the needed funds (approximately $2,200) have been requested. These funds, if appropriate will purchase two telecassette units and blank tapes. The present telephone system will be sufficient, but some funding is requested to cover installation of the equipment. Arrangements have been made with IFAS Editorial Department for agents to record the tapes using recording equipment in Gainesville.

Evaluation of the System

The present office system will lend itself very well to recording accurately the number of calls which the "Library on Tape" receives and which tapes are requested (See Appendix B Receptionist Log). This capability will allow us to assess the value of each tape individually.

Six months after the "Extension Library on Tape" is implemented, we will survey a sampling of the receptionist logs.

The following instrument will be used to determine the usefulness of the program and the information provided on the tapes:

1. Have you requested information from Extension Library on Tape?
   Yes ___ No ___
2. If yes, which tape/tapes have you requested? (Topics listed by number)
3. Did you receive the information you needed from the taped message?
4. What other information would be helpful to you via taped message?
5. Do you plan to use this service for future questions or problems?
   Yes ___ No ___

This instrument could be used effectively each year to assess the value of the method of program delivery.

Conducting this survey and collecting the data has been beneficial to the Sarasota County Extension Staff. Not only has it given the staff

an opportunity to work together on a project of common interest, but it also has shown that Extension is effective in providing information to the general public.

The telephone has been confirmed as an effective means of providing information to the general public in an urban setting. Therefore, members of the staff are committed to doing what they can to develop this method of program delivery. The telecassette system which was surveyed is one means of helping the Extension Staff reach this goal.

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APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument
and
Correspondence

FLORIDA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
SCHOOL OF FOREST RESOURCES AND CONSERVATION
AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATIONS
COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE

REPLY TO: 2900 Ringling Blvd.
Sarasota, FL 33577
813/955-6239

April 27, 1979

Dear Sarasota County Citizens:

The Sarasota County Extension office is in the process of reviewing and evaluating the way educational information is provided to you. Our objective is to better serve you. Yet, we are committed to hold the line with county and state budgets. So, we cannot commit program delivery funds on untested methods. We are, therefore, in need of your opinion.

We are considering installing a county-wide telephone information system (brief 3-4 minute recorded messages on frequently requested topics), as a part of our current telephone system. So, your position is important in helping us decide whether to install this device.

Your reply will be held in the strictest confidence. Please note the code number will be used only if we have to send you a second survey request. Please return this within one week to assist us accomplish this project and to avoid a second notice.

Return the survey form in the enclosed self-addressed envelope. (No return postage is necessary.)

Thank you.

Respectfully,

Jean Meadows
Jeanette Meadows
Extension Agent III
Home Economics

Elva Farrell
Elva Farrell
Extension Agent I
4-H

L. L. Rozar, Jr.
L. L. Rozar, Jr.
County Extension Director III

LLR/jj
Encl. (survey)
(envelope)

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

SARASOTA COUNTY

PROGRAM DELIVERY SURVEY

April, 1979
Sarasota, Florida

1. In which of the following ways have you had contact with the Cooperative Extension Service in Sarasota County? (Check one or more)

___Correspondence
___4-H or Homemakers Clubs
___Exhibits
___Home & Gardening Tips (recording)
___Newspaper, Radio, TV
___Newsletter
___Office Visits
___Programs
___Publications
___Telephone
___None

2. Are you familiar with the Tele-Consumer toll-free number pre-taped telephone information?

___Yes ___No

3. Have you used this service?

___Yes ___No

4. How much do you rely on the telephone for information?

___Much ___Some ___Little ___None

5. In which of the following taped telephone topics are you interested? (Check)

___Ant & Roach Control
___Budget Guidelines
___Canning Guidelines
___Care of Citrus Trees
___Controlling Plant Pests
___Controlling Weeds in Lawn
___Energy & Water Conservation
___Farm Economic Outlook
___Fertilizing Plants
___4-H Activity Information
___Freezing Fruits & Veg.
___How to Join 4-H
___How to Start a Veg.Garden
___Lawn Insect Control
___Livestock Topics
___Microwave Use
___Mildew Prevention
___Mobile HOme Publications
___Outdoor Cooking
___Planning Nutritious Meals
___Refinishing Furniture
___Roasting Meats & Fowl
___Selecting an Appliance
___Weather Forecast

6. Which months of the year do you live in Sarasota County? (Please circle)

Jan. Feb. March April May June July

Aug. Sept. Oct. Nov. Dec. All Year

7. Your age? (Check one)

___8-18 ___19-35 ___36-50 ___51-64 ___65 or older

ear Sarasota County Citizen

By now I trust you have returned the survey mailed to you recently from the Sarasota County Extension Office. Thank you for taking the time to help us assess our program delivery methods and to determine future needs.

If you have not yet returned the survey please consider this a reminder. We would greatly appreciate your assistance in this project.

Thank you.

Respectfully,

L. L. Rozar, Jr.
County Extension Director (III)

FLORIDA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA
INSTITUTE OF FOOD AND AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES

COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE · AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATIONS · COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE · SCHOOL OF FORESTRY

REPLY TO

2900 Ringling Blvd.
Sarasota, Fl. 33577
May 7, 1979

Dear Sarasota County Citizen:

We have not received your response to the survey concerning the installation of a county wide telephone information system. Since you are a part of a random sample of the total population of Sarasota County, your imput is vital to the success of our research.

We know you are busy, but we feel that the results of this study will be important enough to merit the few minutes needed to complete the questionaire. A second questionaire is enclosed. The self addressed envelope for return needs no postage.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Respectfully,

Jeanette Meadows
Extension Agentn III
Home Economics

Elva Farwell
Extension Agent I
4-H

L. L. Rozar, Jr.
County Extension Director (III)

LLR/b
Encl. survey
envelope

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK IN AGRICULTURE AND HOME ECONOMICS STATE OF FLORIDA, IFAS, UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA, U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, AND BOARDS OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, COOPERATING

APPENDIX B

Telephone Log

TIME	INCOMING CONTACTS						
	TELEPHONE	VISITORS	AGENT PROG. ASST	COUNTY LOCATION	POW GOAL #	TAPE REQ'D	DETAILS

TIME	INCOMING CONTACTS						
	TELEPHONE	VISITORS	AGENT PROG. ASST	COUNTY LOCATION	POW GOAL #	TAPE REQ'D	DETAILS

23